

Guidance Information
New Hampshire GRP Rating Form - FY2004

General

This rating sheet was developed to rate applications in the Grassland Reserve Program for FY 2003.

Application information

All rating forms must have the items at the top of the form completed. Each application will have either an estimated annual rental rate or estimated easement cost, but not both.

Ranking Criteria

Distance (by roads) to urban area: For the purposes of GRP, an urban area is defined as land with a density of 30 structures per 40-acre area.

Threat of conversion to cropland is assumed to be greatest in areas where the soils could support such a use. Therefore the well-established important farmland soils classification groups (prime farmland, soils of statewide and local importance) will be used for this purpose. The **important farmland soils groups** can be found in the electronic field office technical guide available on the web at (<http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov>). The soils information is in Section II. Select the County of concern and open the spreadsheet. The farmland soils groups are in a column titled "farmclass". This information is also available using the Soils Data Viewer.

Percent population change points are assigned based on the US Census Bureau rate of population change from 1990 - 1999. The data is available as an attached file or at the following web address <http://eire.census.gov/popest/archives/place/mcdchg/MCDCHGNH.txt>

Proximity to other protected lands points will be assigned based on information available using the GRANIT Conservation Lands Viewer found at: <http://www.granit.sr.unh.edu> or other documented permanently protected lands. When creating a map with GRANIT, for map display settings, select "protection level".

Acreage to be enrolled - projects less than 10 acres are not eligible for GRP. The total acreage does not need to be contiguous, however, the minimum size of a parcel must be at least 10 acres.

Habitat for endangered, threatened and at-risk species points are to be assigned when the parcel is specifically managed to benefit these species. Points are only awarded for actions planned that will protect T&E species according to a plan developed with a biologist. Points can be awarded for State or Federally Listed Species or "At-risk species". It is assumed that these points will be assigned in addition to the 10 points for significant wildlife benefit.

Estimated operation and maintenance costs are related to the intensity of management and work required to maintain the production system. Permanent pastures typically require less O&M costs than improved pastures or hayland.

2/13/2004

